

HOLOCAUST

CENTER *for*

HUMANITY

Educate. Inspire. Take Action.

Henry Friedman

Video Transcripts

Video 1: Hiding

We found space above the animals in a barn. The house was kind of divided into half. Half of the house, the Symchucks lived in. The other half, they had animals. We were put above the animals. When morning came, we found ourselves in complete darkness because we were surrounded by hay. Our space was about the size of a queen-size bed. Little did I know at that time that I would have to spend 18 months in this space without ever raising my voice because all I could do is whisper.

Video 2: Starvation

The people that took us in were not the elite. They were poor people. My father prepared food for three months, for six months. But the food was gone after three months

The piece of bread that we got, I ate it right away. My younger brother would save it so he could eat it later but I was so hungry. So he would nap and I would start nibbling away on his bread and before long, I ate it.

When he would wake up I would tell him a story that the mice ate it because we had mice all over; they were not afraid of us. One time he caught me reaching for his bread; he started crying and my mother got very angry with me. We were all starving. And I got very angry at my mother. And I said 'Mom, look at me. I have blue eyes. I am blond. Why am I in this place?' And all we could do is just cry.

Video 3: Rescuers

A lady, a young lady, she was 17 years old, a Christian lady, her name was Julia Symchuck, she worked in a police station in February 1942, when she overheard a conversation between the Gestapo and the Ukraine police that they are about to pick up my father.

Early in the morning, she ran through deep snow to warn my father to run for his life. And because of this young Christian girl risking her life, I'm alive today.

My father found space with a lady –a Christian lady, who did not tell her husband, did not tell her two teen-age sons that she was taking my dad. She found space in a barn above a coop, a chicken coop. Myself, my mother, my brother and the Jewish teacher found space with the parents of Julia Symchuck who in February risked her life. In October, her parents risked their lives to take our family in.

Video 4: Reunion

I got myself oriented then and I knew where I was. So I started walking and I see a lady taking a cow to pasture. And I said 'is this Julia Symchuck' because I didn't want to give away names to endanger these people. And she said 'Da' and I started running up on a hill, running towards her with a huge camera in those days and she thought I was KGB. She was very frightened because I was yelling 'Julia! Julia!' And I mentioned my name, doesn't ring a bell. Then I mentioned my mother's name and she almost fainted. Mary Symchuck, her mother, was dead. But her father was senile; he didn't know who I was. He was over 90-some years old then at that time.

And immediately I started working to bring Julia to the United States.

If you ever go to Israel, you will see on the Righteous Avenue their name, the Symchucks' name. If you go to Washington DC at the Memorial Museum under Ukraine who helped the Jews, the Symchucks' name is also there for helping our family.